

Socialist Worker Review

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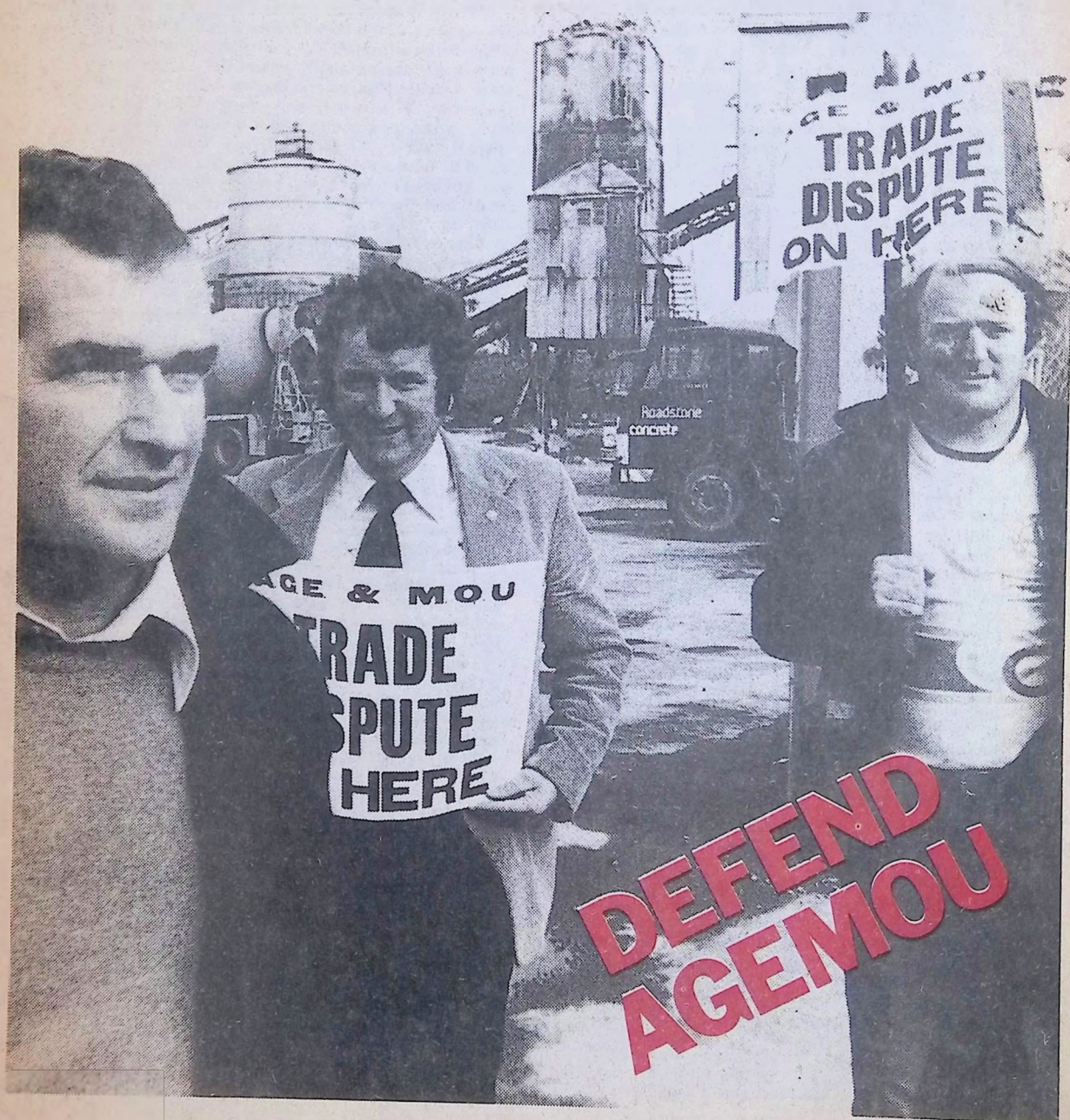
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REVOLUTION REVIEWED

KILROYS

15p



SOCIALIST WORKER REVIEW

Editorial

The I.C. T. U. vote against talks on a new National Wage Agreement. AGEMOU, defies Congress in support of Roadstone workers, whilst Jack Lynch rages against "unofficial" strikes. Dublin busmen prepare to go for £17.50, while in other areas in the public sector, the nurses are campaigning for a 50% increase and the rank and file in the Post Office have begun to shake up their unions. Meanwhile, the Social Contract totters in Britain and the North as Ford workers lead the way. Things are shaping up for a winter of discontent on the industrial front.

The upturn in the Irish economy and the massive increases in profits has restored confidence and set new targets for thousands of workers. The opening which was provided by the 2% clause in the current National Wage Agreement has been seised upon to win increases far above the terms of the agreement. What worries the F.U.E. and the Fianna Fail government, is that the terms of the wage agreement are merely seen as stepping stones, by many sections, for winning additional increases at local level. The only 'crime' of the AGEMOU was that they publicly supported their members in these struggles - whereas others gave the nod and the wink, if they had the guts to do even that.

It was those pressures which led to the break in the seven year old pattern of N.W.A. talks. The string of wage movements and party claims in the private sector acted as a stimulus for those in the public sector - who had been most constricted by wage agreements. The union leaders of the public sector unions, who had been among the most vociferous defenders of the NWA felt that pressure and did an about turn.

It would be nice to think that the shackles of wage restraint have been thrown off. But the wage agreements still need to be dealt a killer blow before they can be buried. The position of the ITGWU leadership who swung their votes against entering talks, should be enough to warn us off that.

Their position has not moved one iota from the tired old line they have been mouthing for years - although they too, have felt the pressure on the ground. Essentially they are hooked, like addicts who need a fix - on centralised bargaining. Their tremendous power as a bureaucracy rests on their ability to stifle shop floor initiative and confidence. The N.W.A., which succeeded in destroying most of the elements of shop floor bargaining, helped enormously in strengthening the dependence of the rank and file on the officials.

Backed up by a slight veneer of rhetoric they are now talking of a new concept in 'comprehensive bargaining'. In fact, they are looking for a Social Contract where wage restraint is traded off for a voice for the ITGWU leadership in the running of the economy. Put simply, John Carroll and his cohorts are saying: promise us progressive legislation bring social welfare benefits into line with the cost of living and open up a job creation programme and then we will see to it that wage restraint sticks.

The terrible irony is that the exact same 'strategy' is in a shambles in Britain and N.Ireland. Precisely because workers found that behind all the sugar

A Winter of discontent

coating, the Social Contract was nothing but a device for holding down wages. Unfortunately, though, the Social Contract argument has won support from one section of the left, namely the SFWP who swung behind opening the wage talks at the W.U.I. Congress. Yet the proposal for a Social Contract is the very issue that the Fianna Fail government will seize upon in their desperate need for wage restraint. And the ICTU bureaucrats have left themselves plenty of time before the current agreement runs out, to repair the fences.

Essentially the notion behind a Social Contract - if we are to accept it at its face value, is that Capitalism can be reformed or at least given a human face if we all play the rules of the game. But workers have never made the slightest gain through sacrifice. Quite the reverse. We have only won reforms from the state when we were prepared to fight in confident and militant manner. But the effects of a Social Contract would be to demoralise whole sections of workers who had been excluded from bargaining and struggle on the shop floor and who had seen their living standards cut to ribbons.

But there is another aspect to this which renders the whole scheme ludicrous. The government and the employers are well aware of the need to dampen down the economy to prevent inflation rising again. That means cutting back on borrowing and public spending. They know only too well that the boom in the world economy is steadily running out of steam. In those circumstances any concessions they are likely to make are minimal and would simply be got from savings in the public sector wage bill. Given the growing need to rationalise, to cut manning levels in preparation for an increased scale of competition, the job-creation schemes of government are merely cosmetic exercises. But Carroll's calls for a job-creation programme as a trade off for wage restraint dovetails nicely with the Fianna Fail formula that its' wage rises which cause unemployment.

Wage restraint in all its forms must be defeated. Over the coming months, we need to argue in the union branches or on the shop floor against wage restraint in any new form. But just as the last proposal to enter talks for a new N.W.A. wasn't defeated by resolutions alone, we need to argue for direct action in the here and now as the best means to destroy wage restraint in all its forms. The pressing of claims far in above the 2% clause of this agreement, the establishment of a claim of further party struggles AND the active solidarity between the strong and the weak sections - is the type of direct action we need. The emphasis must not be on the preservation of differentials which the N.W.A. may have compressed but rather on broad based across the board claims e.g., for £15. rise.

In these circumstances the S.L.P. can play decisive role in taking the arguments into the union branches and the workplaces. But that necessitates a change on the part of the leadership of the party from viewing trade union work as just an optional extra for fervent enthusiasts. If the S.L.P. is to establish a base in the working class - and that in the final analysis, is the only guarantee for its revolutionary content - it must relate to the existing struggles of the class rather than attempting to lay down the most radical programmes in election manifesto's.

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Photos on pages 1, 4, 9 Derek Speirs (IFL)

Socialist Worker Review

Socialist Worker Review is produced by a group of members of the Socialist Labour Party. The magazine is published monthly and will argue for the following points:

Opposition to National Wage Agreements or wage restraint in any form and argue for the building of a rank and file movement in the unions to fight for union democracy and militant policies.

Support for the struggles of the unemployed and oppose redundancies and productivity deals.

Opposition to state repression and argue for trade union action to oppose repression.

Support for the women's struggle in all areas, economic and social.

A socialist answer to the national question based on the unity of the working class.

The supporters of the magazine will constitute the Socialist Workers Tendency.

Readers are invited to write articles, letters or comments and contribute to the development of a revolutionary tendency in the SLP.

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Sandinista guerrillas fighting in the recent civil war in Nicaragua.

NICARAGUA

The last few months have seen a remarkable uprising in Nicaragua that on first sight, might confound many on the revolutionary left. For one thing we have seen the employers through their Chambers of Commerce help to invite and support a general strike. And although the guerrilla movement - as a strategy for attaining power - was regarded as finished throughout Latin America, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (SFNL) in Nicaragua has been making international news in its struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. Hugh Spincer takes a closer look at events in that country.

The name of the Sandinista guerrillas comes from Augusto Cesar Sandino who served as a general in a former guerrilla campaign against U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua. In fact, between 1927 and 1932, the U.S. sent in 4,600 troops and countless supplies to combat General A.C. Sandino's "Little Army of Free Men" in what has been called America's first Vietnam.

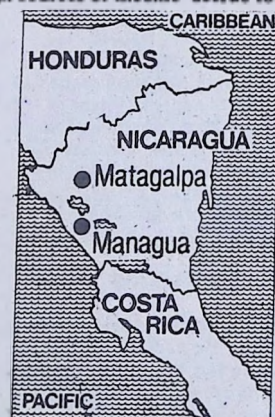
Somoza's own regime also has its historical origin in the Sandino struggle against U.S. imperialist intervention. When in 1933, the American Government were forced to abandon Nicaragua, it replaced the "marines" with a local army, the National Guard. The General who was entrusted to lead the National Guard was Anastasio Somoza Garcia, a devoted servant of imperialism.

On the 21st of February 1934, Sandino and his family were assassinated by Somoza Garcia. Soon afterwards, in 1936, General A. Somoza overthrew the Juan B Sacasa Government and inaugurated the military dictatorship which his family has inherited until now. The present dictator is Anastasio Somoza De bayle.

Through its absolute control it transformed itself into the most powerful capitalist sector within the ruling class in Nicaragua. This development

created a contradictory situation within the bourgeoisie. A section of that class felt themselves restricted by the monopolistic economic control which the Somoza family imposed and therefore would prefer the 'Normal Laws' of capitalist competition. It is this section which now appears to be fighting for the establishment of "democracy" in Nicaragua.

However another section of the bourgeoisie are quite prepared to associate with Somoza and to participate in a collective way in enjoying the privileges which the arbitrary use of the State's Power bestows; Similarly, Somoza's regime has created a military bureaucracy whose principal source of income is derived from activities on the margins of the dictatorship's own legality. Thus fantastically high sources of income accrue to this



group from extortion, from maintaining their monopoly over lotteries and gambling and from organised prostitution. This military bureaucracy is obviously interested and prepared to fight for the retention of Somoza's government apparatus.

Likewise, the Nicaragua of

Somoza provides a guaranteed high return on investment for U.S. companies and banks, which held 308 million dollars worth of assets there in 1974. And according to a Pentagon spokesman: "the Central American isthmus is of special importance since it permits access by relatively defensible routes to the raw materials of South America" site for an inter-oceanic canal and a key to controlling the Caribbean (including Panama, Jamaica and Cuba).

Perhaps most important is Nicaragua's position as the main "domino" from which to control and repress the peoples of the Central American countries. In 1954, U.S. planes and mercenary troops took off from Nicaragua to overthrow the left-leaning Nationalist Government of Jacob Arbenz in Guatemala, in the hemisphere's first C.I.A. coup. Thus began a terror campaign which has lasted to the present and taken over 20,000 lives. In 1955 Somoza invaded Costa Rica, seeking to overthrow the civilian government and end the activities of Nicaraguan exiles. Again in 1972 Somoza reportedly sent arms and supplies through the Central American Defense Council to crush a revolt against there allegedly responsible for engineering the fraud which brought Guatemala's President Lauger to power.

The Nicaraguan people have been victims of the most horrible abuse, persecutions and assassinations under the Somoza regime - particularly the peasantry who form 51% of the population who live in the most dreadful misery. The results of more than 40 years of U.S. backed dictatorship speaks for themselves: 50% of the population earn less than 90 dollars a year; the official unemployment rate is 36% while it is estimated that 60% of these in the countryside are underemployed less than half of Nicaragua's 2.5 million people can read. The majority of the working class

which is concentrated in Managua and represents 20% of the whole urban population, is organically very weak. From the very outset of its union and political organization, it has been under the political influence of both the employers and reformist parties. The latter are represented by the N.S.P. (Socialist Party of Nicaragua) and is in fact the local Communist Party. The N.S.P. was created during the period of the Popular Front strategy and initially regarded Somoza as an ally against fascism! At the moment, the N.S.P. is split and represent two different Communist Parties - though there is no fundamental difference between them.

It was in this social and political context that the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (SFNL) was born on the 23rd of July, 1961. It was created by a section of university students who were influenced by the Cuban Revolution. There were many other guerrilla movements before the SFNL but all these failed.

The SFNL defined itself through its rejection of the reformism of the N.S.P. Nevertheless, it also maintained a military conception of its role in the class struggle and as a result failed to understand the necessity of constructing a vanguard party which would attempt to undermine the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and the reformists over the working class. In this manner and in spite of the wide National sympathy that the SFNL has earned, it has not given rise to a social and political structure which would allow it to provide the effective leadership for the mass movement.



SOMOZA

The SFNL has recently undergone an internal crisis as certain guerrilla sections promoted a discussion in an attempt to solve that political problem. As a result of these discussions there are two wings of the SFNL today: the Terceristas (Thirdists) and the Tendencia Proletaria (Proletarian Tendency).

Another section - the Revolutionary Front of Students - has since been absorbed into the SFNL - Thirdists.

The SFNL - Thirdists, is the majority tendency and has taken the offensive in the military actions, including the assault on the National Congress last August which precipitated the recent events which have shaken Nicaragua.

The SFNL - Proletarian Tendency argues for giving a preponderant role to the political and union organizations of the masses and for the need to build a revolutionary vanguard party. In October, this group characterised the situation as follows:

"We can distinguish two fundamental aspects in the present conjuncture:
a) The Somoza military dictatorship's exhaustion as an instrument for the preservation of the interests of imperialism and the bourgeoisie
b) The objective weakness of the revolutionary classes - the working class and the peasants - to impose their solution at the present conjuncture.

The deterioration of the dictatorship represents a major source of worry for the national bourgeoisie and imperialism. In addition, Somoza's regime is an embarrassment to the new strategy of 'Human Rights' planned by Carter's administration.

That section of bourgeoisie who are addicted to the Somoza regime are quite naturally in favour of the continuity of Somocism or at least to some other formula that preserves the interests of the Somoza family. However, the majority of the bourgeoisie have moved to a position of opposition to the regime but are demanding the replacement of Somoza by another military or civilian figure who will continue to preserve the economic and political basis of the dictatorship. Finally, a small section of the bourgeoisie, who have not been compromised with the regime, is struggling for the overthrow of Somoza and are demanding the establishment of a Provisional Government. The guerrilla movement would play an important role in achieving this objective."

"The SFNL appears to be linked to the latter alternative with the role of executing the military operation that would give efficacy to the political formula offered by their section of the bourgeoisie."

The analysis contained in the above statement helps to explain the participation of the employers in the present events in Nicaragua as well as the SFNL political position.

In fact, when military action was launched by the SFNL (Democratic Union of Liberation) - which is an alliance between the reformist bourgeoisie opposed to the dictatorship,

the trade union and both wings of the N.S.P. (Communist Party), - called for a general strike. Soon during the struggle new sections of the bourgeoisie participated in this alliance which then took the name of Frente Amplio De Oposicion (Broad Front of Opposition).

The Broad Front of Opposition has already sent out many feelers looking for a 'democratic' solution. Three of its representatives have accepted foreign mediation through a letter sent to the U.S.A., Venezuela and the Panama Governments. Previously, the U.S. had offered its mediation to establish contacts between the dictatorship and the opposition. Somoza immediately accepted Carter's mediation.



Nevertheless, the SFNL has rejected all formulas which serve to continue the ties to imperialism and at the same time maintain the dictatorship. But military actions by the SFNL have been suspended.

Notwithstanding this rejection by the SFNL, the essential point is that all the capacity for maneuver is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the reformists. That is the hard reality for the SFNL.

It is premature to attempt to predict what will happen in Nicaragua. But an important lesson is nevertheless clear: only the working class which has established its own revolutionary vanguard party can lead the struggle that will finally defeat imperialism and the native bourgeoisie and win the socialist system.

On the other hand, whatever the errors of the SFNL, it is the duty of the international working class and revolutionary movements to solidise with the struggle of the Nicaraguan people because that struggle is being waged against one of the cruelest and bloodiest dictatorships in Latin America. It is also a struggle against imperialism which is really responsible not only for the dictatorship in Nicaragua but also in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Paraguay, Uruguay and most Latin American countries.

Kilroys A Light at the end of the tunnel

63 clerical workers at Kilroys of Dublin recently gained £12 over the National Wage Agreement, with no strings attached after a four week unofficial strike. Good news if not exactly earth shattering. Except that they are members of the ITGWU. Except that their branch committee supported them and defied Liberty Hall. Except that their victory has led to more claims. Except that they have now established a fund to aid unofficial strikes. This small dispute could yet turn out to be of major significance both in the fight against wage restraint and for rank and file control in Ireland's biggest union. JOHN CANE reports

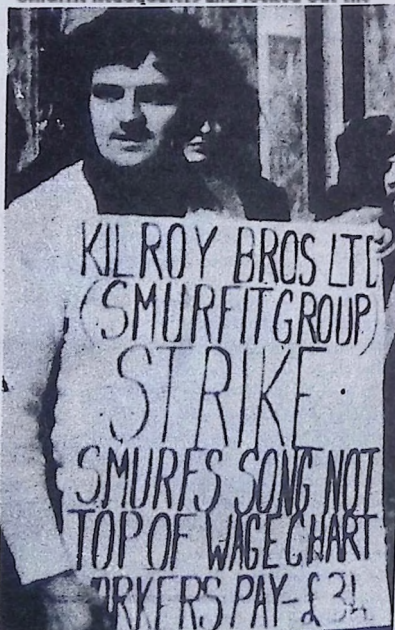
It is no accident that this victory occurred in Branch 13 of the ITGWU - the electrical branch. For well over a year now the branch, with some 3000 members, has been fast slipping out of the control of the Liberty Hall bureaucrats and the full-time officials. In most ITGWU branches, affairs are controlled by a small group of loyal shop stewards, in turn controlled by the full-time officials. The powers of the branch committee are severely limited and the ordinary members can only meet once a year. Many ITGWU militants, therefore ignore them altogether - the example of branch 13 proves them wrong. By a sustained and concerted campaign, militant shop stewards in the branch have gradually gained a majority on the committee, elected their own president and began the process of smashing the power of the officials without in any way becoming divorced from the needs of their own workers on the shop floor.

The results are already apparent. A full-time official was dragged before the ICTU for violating the democratic procedures, an attempt to split a militant section away from the branch was foiled, the branch issued a leaflet to all delegates at this year's annual conference calling for greater democracy in the union, a vote was passed calling for an inquiry into the allegations against Mullen and Co. contained in a New Liberty (ITGWU rank and file group) pamphlet. The branch led the opposition to Carrol's "Social Contract" NWA position at the special delegate conference. It is not without cause that they have been nicknamed the "rebel" branch. Such actions have their limits of course. The tentacles of the ITGWU bureaucracy are vast. The greatest problem remains how to extend such ideas throughout the rest of the union. But, equally the greatest gain has been that such a branch can sustain and encourage (independently of the Bureaucracy) groups of workers prepared to take on the bosses and the ideas of wage restraint. Kilroys were one such group.

The majority of the Kilroy workers were on a basic as low as £43 a week. Kilroys are

part of the giant and extremely profitable Smurfit group. They reckoned they needed £15 a week to keep up with inflation and give them a decent living wage. The company offered a miserly £3. Unanimously they voted to strike. They reckoned, at first, the Union would back them. After all, hadn't Fintona Kennedy proclaimed the HELP (Higher Earnings for the Lower Paid) campaign only a few months before? Wasn't Mickey Mullen forever issuing statements about the wicked employers and how the ITGWU would stand by the lower paid NWA or no NWA! Ah, but there's the rub. You see, these people don't really mean what they say. And that goes double for national wage agreements. So they condemned the strike and told them that they could not win. The strike continued with the bosses refusing to negotiate because it was "unofficial".

The turning point came about two weeks later on the 4th. of October. Its worth recalling the events of the day. In the morning the workers occupied the offices of Smurfit headquarters and locked out the



management. They were enjoined but the action had served its purpose. Smurfits now knew they were dealing with a determined and united workforce. They began to think again about "no negotiations". Events later that evening convinced them to change their minds. A special branch meeting had been called to discuss the dispute. The full time official presumed it would condemn this "wildcat" action. It did not. It voted to support the strikers "morally and financially". Meanwhile the Kilroy workers themselves, were outside picketing Liberty

Hall where Mullen was due to speak at a Civil Rights Anniversary meeting. (He didn't show) In a fit of pique, the official refused to allow the branch committee to inform them of the decision inside the walls of Liberty Hall. In retaliation the workers decided that any negotiations with the company must be conducted by the branch president, not the official. The break was complete. From this point on it was a rank and file dispute, pure and simple.

Two weeks later the company caved in £12 was conceded across the board with no strings attached, and this on top of the NWA. The strikers were so confident that before they signed the agreement they insisted the strike committee be given the first day back off work to go round the various factories thanking workers for their donations.

The Kilroys victory has given rise to a spate of similar claims in the electrical industry. Within days, Brownlee Bros. announced they were going for the same and would strike if necessary. They got it immediately. Previously the union had been trying to get them to accept £2 as the best available. Phillips workers now look likely to follow suit. On top of this, the Kilroy workers have now set up a special fund which is to be used to finance any unofficial strikes in the union without strike pay. With this unique development, the beginnings of an organised rank and file alternative within the ITGWU has suddenly become something more than New Liberty propaganda.

Lets not exaggerate, 63 Kilroy workers or even a "rebel branch" of 3000 does not exactly mean that Mullen and Co. will resign tomorrow. But it does vindicate to some extent, the work put in by New Liberty over the last few years. New Liberty supporters have always argued that it is possible (by combining the fight against wage restraint, against redundancies etc. and a fight for democracy and rank and file control in the union) to negate the power of the bureaucracy and lay the basis for an alternative rank and file leadership. Its early days yet, but the Kilroy workers have shown that there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

DEFEND AGEMOU

The suspension of AGEMOU from Congress over their support for the Roadstone Strikers represents a significant blow against the unity of the trade union movement. At the same time, it opens up new possibilities for trade union militants and socialists campaigning against wage restraint. John Cane and Frank Bambrick look at the background to the decision and assess the implications.

The 600 AGEMOU workers in Roadstone never set out to break the National Wage Agreement. The origin of the dispute was a long-standing comparability claim with workers in Clondalkin Concrete and Cement Limited. In mid-September the company made an offer well below that claim on the money side and containing productivity clauses which could only lead to a worsening of conditions (eg., some workers giving up the right not to clock-on, dismissal for unofficial strikes etc.). All eleven Roadstone Unions refused the offer (including ITGWU, the second main union in Roadstone). AGEMOU members, however, tired of endless negotiations, voted for strike action whilst the ITGWU dithered. But the AGEMOU pickets were respected. There was, and still is, tremendous sympathy amongst other Roadstone workers for the AGEMOU stand.

It was at this point that the FUE and ICTU bureaucrats decided to move. It has become increasingly obvious, that both have seen the dispute as a test case in holding the line on the current NWA and ensuring "orderly" industrial relations. First, the Employer-Labour Conference and then the ICTU condemned the union and ordered a return to work. It is worth noting that on the trade union side exactly the same bureaucrats (Harold O'Sullivan ETAL) took the decisions on both bodies. A quick stroll up the road and a change of hats was all that was necessary. AGEMOU, to their credit, refused to be intimidated. The inevitable followed - suspension from Congress. In the meantime, ITGWU began the dirty work on the ground. Tom O'Brien their chief hatchet-man, was drafted into bully his workers past the pickets. With some local exceptions the tactics have worked. AGEMOU is now isolated from the ICTU "family" and the Roadstone dispute has reached stalemate with the company managing to continue operations but on a much reduced scale.

THE AGEMOU SUPPORT GROUP / ANTI-NWA MEETING IN THE ORMOND HOTEL

Soon after the AGEMOU support group was formed - by a number of trade unionists. The idea was first mooted at a meeting of AGEMOU Shop Stewards and Socialist Worker Tendency trade unionists shortly before the Congress suspension. Its first meeting on the 19th October attracted around 30 workers from a wide variety of unions - AGEMOU, ITGWU, WUI, ASTMS, AUEW, ATGWU etc., (many from the SLP). The group set itself two main tasks. Firstly, direct support for the Roadstone and British Leyland workers. Secondly, to agitate in the broad trade union movement against the NWA and Congress Picketing Policy. Its main public expression was a solidarity picket on ICTU Headquarters to protest the suspension of AGEMOU. The picket received widespread media coverage but also pointed up a problem in the strategy of the group. The Roadstone workers, themselves, took a late decision not to take part for fear of "alienating" their fellow workers in Roadstone. The reluctance of the Roadstone workers to publicly associate themselves with the Group has, naturally, forced a change in tactics from an emphasis on the particular dispute to a broader platform of the defence of AGEMOU and an attack on the NWA.

To this end, a public meeting was held on Nov. 13th (the eve of the ICTU Special Delegate Conference). It was attended by over 80 trade unionists and addressed by Charlie Mooney (an AGEMOU Official), Pat Murphy (president of No. 13 branch of the ITGWU), Ed Madden (ASTMS Shop Steward in Lombard & Ulster) and Paddy Bolger (from the militant No. 2 branch of the IPOEU). The theme from the platform and the body of the hall was the same - full support for AGEMOU, an end to all national wage agreements, an end to the two-tier picketing system, for the independence of the trade union

movement and practical support for all workers fighting now to break agreement.

Whilst the public meeting undoubtedly proved that there is a growing rank and file response against wage restraint, it remains to be seen whether or not this can be welded into a significant, organised movement. The meeting took a decision that the Agemou Support Group convene a broader based, working meeting in the near future with the perspective of organising a campaign around the above objectives. However, this is easier said than done! The memory of the old Dublin Shop Stewards Committee still hangs heavy. It would be foolish to prematurely resurrect an organisational structure more suited to a fully-developed rank and file movement, with real roots in the workplaces and unions, and advancing on a number of fronts. Without such development (and we do not have it yet) such an organisation would quickly degenerate into a talking shop for rootless "politicos" forever proclaiming their own pet programmes to a deaf working-class audience.

The question facing militant trade unionists, socialists and the SLP at this point in time is how to advance the small gains made by the AGEMOU Support Group. The key answer must-as always-lie in activity. The crucial task (especially after the postponement of a decision on a further NWA by the ICTU delegates) is to promote, encourage and support all workers to press forward NOW with claims that, of necessity, break the current agreement. This is the ultimate test of any serious Anti-NWA campaign. This means that SLP trade unionists must lead in their own workplaces to activate claims - and we must come together (with other trade unionists) in an organised rank and file grouping to support each other. This year the NWA and Wage restraint can be beaten, but not by propaganda alone.

On September 8th, over 15,000 Waterford Trade Unionists struck work and marched through the city to protest the threatened closure of the National Board and Paper Mills. It was the biggest display of opposition to redundancies seen in Ireland since the fifties. Yet, less than three weeks later the mill quietly closed without any fight back from the workers and the dole queues lengthened by 281. What went wrong?

SWR: Let's start with the announcement that the Mill section would close back in mid-July. What was the reaction of the workers and what steps were taken to oppose it?

RC: Well, the announcement came as something of a shock. The factory didn't seem to be in any serious trouble. It was, in fact, making a profit overall. I suppose management thought they'd rush the Mill closure through without any problem though. The workers weren't noted as the most militant bunch in Waterford, ever since the defeat in the mid-sixties. But the reaction was different. Everyone thought we should do something to share the jobs. A Central Committee was formed of all the Union reps. in the factory. This united the Mill and box sections for the first time. We produced facts and figures proving the factory would be viable. But management weren't interested. So we fought a meeting with O'Malley the Minister.



RC: Yeah, we decided to broaden the campaign and look for the support of other Waterford workers. The Trades Council really got behind us and organised the march. It was fantastic. Nearly every single Waterford Worker must have been on it. The councillors and deputies tried to hijack the thing to make political propaganda but we fucked them out. We didn't let them on the platform or anything. The march was a great success but I must admit there was a lot

lead at all. What was his role? RC: O'Brien was one of the main reasons the whole fight fell through. He used to make great speeches alright but when he talked to us all he ever said was that it was useless to think of keeping the jobs and the most we could hope for was a bit more money. For example, the Central Committee called for an embargo on all imports and the ATGWU dockers were all on for it, but O'Brien just refused to put it into effect. We should never have had him on the Committee, I think it was one of the biggest mistakes we made. The ordinary workers fell for a lot of his nonsense.

SWR: Are you saying that O'Brien single-handedly sabotaged the fight for jobs? Surely there were more basic reasons that it collapsed?

RC: No, what I'm saying is O'Brien used the divisions and confusions already there in the workforce to scupper any fight back. For example, the questions of seniority - which workers would go and which stay - had been messing us up right from the beginning. O'Brien could have sorted this out. He refused to. It suited him to keep us divided. And in my opinion the sabotage didn't just come from O'Brien himself, Liberty Hall was right in there behind him. We met Mullen and the rest early on. They promised us full support (privately, of course!) but never lifted a bloody finger when it came to it.

PAPERMILLS WHAT WENT WRONG?

We wanted to demand that the government take the factory over. He fobbed us off with junior officials though so we organised a protest march and threatened to block the bridge. He agreed to meet us but it was a farce. He said he couldn't interfere with private industry.

SWR: The failure of these talks led to the big march. How significant was this to the mill workers? How did you want the campaign to develop?

of confusion as to where to go from here. The SLP branch put out a leaflet calling for an occupation backed up by a levy on all Waterford workers. To my mind this was the only way to seriously fight for the jobs but a lot of the workers were more interested in getting the maximum amount of money they could.

SWR: Michael O'Brien, the ITGWU Official, gave a very militant speech from the platform but I can't remember him giving any

SWR: What happened at the final mass meeting, before the closure deadline.

RC: Well, the immediate issue was still the money rather than the jobs. The Rights Commissioner had recommended that we be given four times the statutory. It was decided to put this to management. They refused to budge from their offer of only twice the act. Faced with this the Central Committee decided to recommend against acceptance and to continue the fight either by an immediate strike for more money (remember only half the factory was due for closure) or an occupation to save the jobs. O'Brien had to put the recommendation but didn't argue for it. He told us to take the money and run. Myself and Sean O'Farrell argued for occupation. The SLP branch put in another leaflet. But it was too late. Only 44 workers backed the Committee and the thing was finished.

SWR: Do you think it could have turned out any different? What lessons are there for future struggles?

RC: Well, one thing I learned - that it's the hardest argument in the world to convince workers to fight for their jobs especially when there's a bit of money there for the taking. A lot of the

there but we failed to get across the message of occupation. With the Union against it and no successful example in Ireland to point to, people just can't see how it would work. Whether it would succeed or not.



15,000 Workers march to support papermill workers.

workers in the Mill were near retiring anyway and a good few were small farmers with no commitment to the factory. I don't know if it could have been different. The anger against closure was certainly

The SLP will have to put more effort into this. I'm convinced that with just one successful fight back things could be different.

**MONTHLY
SOCIALIST
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SOCIALIST LABOUR is published monthly by the Socialist Labour Party, at 9 Parnell Sq., Dublin 1. Annual subscription costs £2.

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WHY WE NEED A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

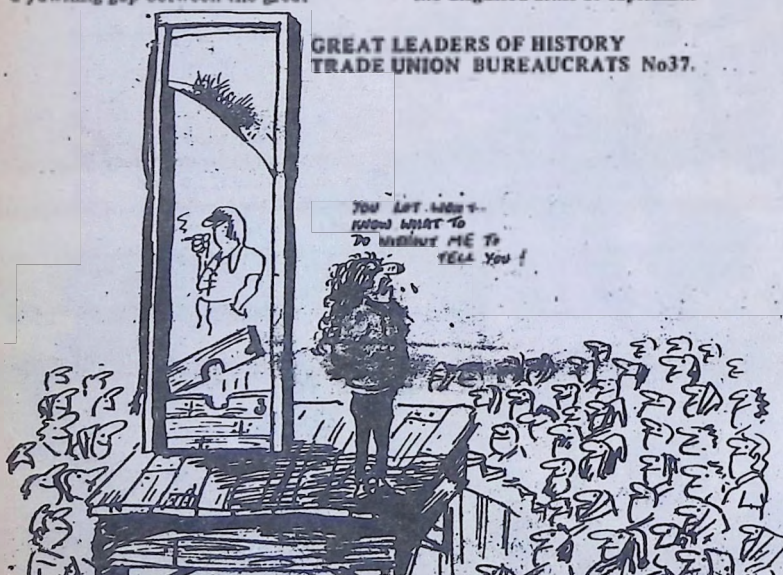
By Des Derwin

There is no organised rank and file movement in the Irish Trade Union movement to speak of. There is no tradition of such a movement in this country, and the Irish industrial scene is sufficiently removed from the British one to place under suspicion any dogmatic transfer of rank and file experience from that country. Yet, over the past few years, there have been attempts to create a rank and file theory in Ireland - and put it into practice. This article by Des Derwin attempts to define a basic position arising from that experience. This position is, more or less that developed by members of the Socialist Workers Tendency over the years.

The unions are organisations of the working class - but with a bureaucracy of full-time officials at the top who have their own set of interests. These interests coincide with the maintenance of the status quo and constantly lead them to hold back worker's militancy and to represent (or at least compromise with) the interests of the bosses. The top unions have long since become monoliths, cluttered with red tape, and with a yawning gap between the great

the hard/soft-selling of National Wage Agreements or Social Contracts, their inactivity on unemployment and the vicious example of scabbing (like the attempt to break the Roadstone strike).

But to ignore this bureaucracy is fatal. Either from the right - by considering the trade union movement as a family with some bad eggs at the top; or from the left - by considering the unions to be unreformable and merely the disguised arms of capitalism



majority of ordinary members and the general life of the union. There is no need to convince anybody who is seriously interested in this discussion that there is at least something amiss with the unions; that the leadership do constantly sell out; that a change is needed. We have all experienced

or the state. The question is one of control. At the moment the control is firmly in the hands of the bureaucracy. And they control where the action is - sitting on the platforms of general meetings, presiding at branch and section meetings, trouble-shooting out in the factories when the lid

blows off. They have the information, they control the purse strings. Often they are the only avenues to widen solidarity. If there is no rank and file alternative to the officials, then they will exert their dominance at the crucial moment, when action is both needed and possible (as in those few brief weeks between the massive protest in Waterford over the closure of NBPM (National Board and Paper Mills) and the eventual acceptance of that closure.

CONTROL

Control must be wrested from the bureaucracy and placed in the hands of the rank and file. The term "rank and file movement" is sometimes used with a variety of meanings. In this perspective, we mean organised groupings of militants, rooted within the workplaces, within and across unions, united around action (particularly on wages and jobs) and the pursuit of union democracy. The rank and file movement will be unofficial, but it must not be outside the Unions. Attendance at union meetings, running for shop steward, pushing the official initiatives of the union to the limit - these are as essential as building shop stewards committees, aiding unofficial strikes or producing rank and file bulletins. The aim is to assist the bureaucracy and replace them with control from the bottom up, with a leadership that is elected recallable and paid the average wage of the membership. To gain rank and file control of negotiations and restore the independence of the trade unions. No restrictions on the right to strike, no wage restraint, no co-operation on rationalisation or redundancies.

These are the aims, but whilst the bureaucrats remain in control, we must build a movement that can by-pass the officials under its own steam (as the first shop stewards movement in Britain around 1918 was able to do).

The Irish working class has constantly thrown up unofficial bodies that run particular struggles for a time and leave the bureaucracy in the wings. In recent times, for example, we have seen the postmen's working committee, the Oil workers Committee, the Workers Action Committee in Belfast, the Waterford Shop Stewards Committee, the Maintenance Craftsmen Association and many others. These were breaths of fresh air, but sectional breezes that blew over after the battles. We must seek a permanent and growing alternative to the bureaucracy.



1973, 300 hundred shop stewards attend meeting against NWA.

It would be the height of dogmatism to lay down, at this stage, the form which an Irish Trade Union rank and file movement will take. It remains to be seen whether the nucleus of the movement will come from the shop-floor or from the activists on the branch and section committees with perhaps a sprinkling of "left officials". It remains to be seen if it will come from industry-wide link ups or from groups of militants in individual unions or workplaces. In all probability most of these areas will play their part. In some situations the New Liberty-type group within one union will be needed, in others the struggle could be carried out at executive level, as in the IPOEU or even possibly) at full union level, as seen in the struggle between AGEMOU and the ICTU. Finally, it remains to be seen whether all these movements will coalesce in an organised National Rank and File Movement or remain a loose federation.

One key test for all these varied forms of rank and file groupings is whether or not they have a "real base". By that is

meant, do they have a serious implantation? Can they mobilise significant numbers of workers? Are their representatives really speaking for the members or are they just "politicos"? Such questions bedevilled the life of, perhaps, the most important attempt to create a rank and file movement in Ireland - the Dublin Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committee (at one point even assuming a National status). The rise and fall of the DSSC from an organisation which could attract over 300 representatives to public meetings and played a large part in defeating one particular National Wage

Agreement in 1974 to a handful of old reliable "trots" trade unionists in 1976, deserves to be dealt with elsewhere. Many issues were raised by the experiment - how to relate to the Trade Union Officials, how to tie theory to practice, how to utilise single-issue campaigns etc. But perhaps, the biggest question is - was it premature? i.e. did it have a "real base"? It may well be that the more varied forms of rank and file organisation mentioned above have a far better chance of achieving that elusive quality than any "grand strategy" at this point in time.

ORGANISATION

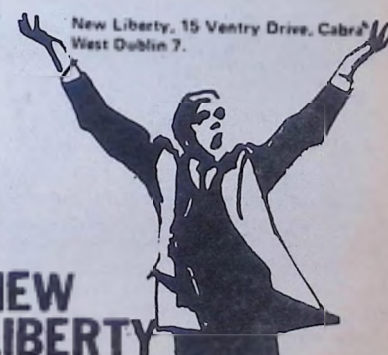
It must also always be remembered that there is no substitute for any socialist trade unionist to the fundamental task of organisation in the workplace (on the actual "shop floor"). Strong workplace organisations - general meetings on the job, control of negotiations, factory bulletins etc will build the confidence of the rank and file for the bigger tasks. Inter-Union and combined committees not only break down divisions

among the workers but also counteract the effects of the union bureaucracies and lead to wider, industry or city, links with other workers.

Rank and file organisation is - in itself - trade union work. But it is undertaken by revolutionary socialists in a political light. In a period of economic crisis it can be explosively political, because in such times even principled trade unionism is expected to take a back seat in the defence of profits and managerial control. The conflict with the trade union bureaucracy is also a political power struggle, the more so that they collaborate more and more blatantly with the bosses and the state to defend the status quo. Without democracy in the unions we can never adequately raise (or get implemented) the wider political issues - such as repression legislation, women's rights etc. The creation of a rank and file movement is political because the very stability of the capitalist system depends on the acceptance of wage restraint, unemployment, public service cuts and rising prices by an acquiescent trade union membership, cowed and controlled by a trade union leadership which largely accepts the capitalist ideology.

SOCIALISTS

It is socialists who, almost always, will take the initiative in building the rank and file movement. That's no accident. It's they who most clearly see through the arguments of both the ruling class and the trade union bureaucracy. If only more socialists would relate more of their political energies to the industrial and trade union struggle - and from the ordinary members side of the platform.



NEW LIBERTY is a group of rank and file members in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LENIN!

The Italian Communist Party is probably the biggest and best organised party in Europe. It is also the party which first began the experimentation with, and elaboration of, the tactics of Euro-communism. Its electoral achievements, its success in identifying itself as the 'cleanest' and non corrupt party, its proven ability to help discipline the working class for wage restraint, and its strategy of alliances laid the political basis for the theory of Eurocommunism. Yet today as it moves closer to participation in government it faces new dilemmas - not least the maintenance of its own cohesiveness and the support of its rank and file. **MOLLY O'DUFFY** looks at how the Italian Communist party is attempting to solve those new problems, that arise from being caught between two stools.

The chief struggle of the Italian Communist Party (P.C.I.) in the past two decades has been the quest for its legitimisation by the governing party, the Christian Democrats (D.C.) and its allies: the church, the national bourgeoisie and American imperialism. All other aims have been subsumed in or subordinated to this first party priority. As a result the party has long been, in terms of its membership, voting support, policies, administration record and alliance strategy a bourgeois party. The party, as the edition of 'La Repubblica' (left-wing independent daily) puts it "has no more exams to sit in democracy". Why therefore has its quest for legitimisation failed? Why in February of this year did the Christian Democrats, for the second time since the general election of 1976, which showed a massive increase in the PCI vote from 27% in 1972 to 35% refuse to accept the latter as full blooded members of a government coalition? The traditional Christian Democratic justification for keeping the PCI out of office has been the Communists retention of the so called "communist" qualities i.e. democratic centralism as the form of internal organisation and the formal allegiance to the block of Communist regimes with the Soviet Union at its head.

In the 60's and 70's democratic centralism has been relaxed and new structures have been created designed to encourage membership participation. Further the PCI has engaged in frequent denunciation of the soviet repression of dissent. However



LENIN

this has not meant a lessening of PCI commitment, in principle to either democratic centralism or membership of the communist world. These commitments are loudly proclaimed every time either is diluted in a practical instance. The DC accusation that the PCI retains certain purely "communist" features is therefore in one sense as valid in 1978 as it was 20 years ago - given that the Italian Eurocommunist road is a relatively old one.

In the summer of this year the Vice-president of the Socialist Party joined with the DC in declaring that one of the obstacles to PCI participation in government was its **LENINIST TRADITION**. This new departure on the part of the

PSI, formerly the PCI's allies against the recalcitrance of the DC led to an unprecedented move by the communists. Whereas previously the party leadership restricted discussion of the Marxist-Leninist tradition of the party to meetings of the rank and file membership and articles in the party's daily paper, the secretary of the PCI Enrico Berlinguer, gave an interview to La Repubblica on the issue of whether the PCI remained a Leninist party.

This clarification of the party's position, designed chiefly to assuage doubts about the democratic nature and intentions of the PCI, repudiated Lenin in substance, but again not in fact. The most staggering features of the interview are its omissions. No mention is made of Lenin's theory of capitalism or imperialism. The revisionism of the PCI in this area is a well established fact. Nor is there any reference to political reality beyond the admission that the PCI is, by supporting in Parliament a DC government of which it is not a member is "falling between two stools". In attempting to satisfy each of the two stools Berlinguer has this to say about Leninism in the party.

The PCI was founded "on the instigation of Lenin" to overcome the ideological confusion and political void which bedevilled the Italian working classes under the leadership of the old Socialist Party. During the early years of the party, Lenin polemized with Bordiga, the ultra-left leader of the party till 1924 on the sectarianism and closed nature of the Communist Party under his leadership. The change of leadership in 1924 (from Bordiga to Gramsci) therefore fulfilled the needs of the party as seen by Lenin. However, the new type of party headed by Gramsci was influenced in its "elaboration and content" by Marx, Engels, Lenin Viro, Cavour and the whole school of theorists on the South of Italy and its problems.

On the issue of democratic centralism, Berlinguer claims that far from being restrictive, Lenin's model guaranteed full discussion of each proposal within the party before its adoption. With regards to the limits on internal dissensions within the party imposed during the "final part" of Lenin's life, the PCI openly "critiques and reproves him for it".

The "Switch of Salerno" (when party leader Palmiro Togliatti in March 1944 declared that the PCI was withdrawing its former refusal to serve in a government appointed by a monarch) signified the abandonment of the error of wishing to "transplant Leninism outside the specific political economic and social conditions in which it was able to triumph". "Not the Soviet but Parliament was the option which the Italian working class had to go for".

According to Berlinguer, Lenin conceived of the battle for democracy as a transitional struggle, necessary for the completion of the bourgeois revolution. For Berlinguer himself on the other hand, democracy is a "universal and

permanent value" "which the working class and communist parties make their own and must proclaim even in the building of a socialist society".

The interview as open to a multitude of interpretations. Two new alignments developed based on reaction to Berlinguer's interview. On the one hand the DC and the Republican Party (and certain factions of the PSI) received the document as an ideological innovation, proof of Berlinguer's democratic responsibility and the irrevocability of his commitment to the "western block". On the other hand, the PSI, the Social Democrats and the Liberals saw in Berlinguer's statements a reaffirmation of the Leninist principles of the PCI.



Enrico Berlinguer of the PCI, Marshal of the French CP.

The leader of the PSI, Bettino Craxi, wrote an article in response to Berlinguer in which he dissociated his party almost entirely from the tradition of Marxist-Leninism, claiming Proudhon, as the originator of the type of socialism the PSI espoused: "Between Leninism and socialism there is a fundamental incompatibility". While this position was repudiated by a sizeable portion of the party, headed by the ex-leader Francesco De Martino, this stands as the view of one of Europe's oldest and formerly most radical socialist parties. The socialist policy towards the PCI remains that its participation in government would be legitimate only in cases of emergency or "national" governments.



Luciano Barca and Sergio Segre leading exponents of Eurocommunism and possible future leaders of the PCI.



Several questions arise in relation to this new burst of internecine warfare within the reformist left in Italy. Why is the PCI so reluctant to throw out the last remnants of "communist" baggage since it has happily repudiated the chief elements of theoretical Marxism when expediency dictated? There are two answers to this, the first in terms of the party's own experience, the second in terms of the system in which it operates.

In the first case the PCI owes its survival in difficult periods (the fascist and cold war years) to its identification with the Soviet Union and the tight and disciplined nature of its organisation. Much of the rank and file membership of the party sees in the Soviet Union the chief protector of the PCI and the leadership exploits this to provide an element of certainty and continuity amid the vicissitudes of daily politics.

In the second case the position is dictated by the fact that in Italy where the DC has been in government without interruption for decades, the tendency is for all electoral parties, whether in opposition or coalition with the DC, to draw near the latter in an attempt to share in spoils derived there by the lack of alternation in power. This process has

already taken place in the PSI and has led to an identity crisis within and loss of support for the party. The PCI feels that given its call for a "historic compromise" between DC and PCI the only hope for the preservation of a separate identity within the PCI is the "communist" qualities which make it fundamentally "different" from other Italian parties. Thus the nearer the PCI gets to the DC the more loudly it proclaims its attachment to democratic centralism and the communist world.

The second question which arises is. Why should the PSI attack the PCI so virulently for what is surely a mild and nostalgic stance on Lenin? Berlinguer's answer to this - "Sour Grapes" - can be given a certain credence. The PSI is attacking a strong political resource of the PCI which the Socialists themselves threw over to their detriment between 1956 and 1963.

MODERATE SUPPORT

However, the PSI is also making a clear dive for moderate left-wing support and capitalise on the fact of PSI gains and PCI losses in the local elections of May 1978. Hoping the PCI's double game is at last costing in the support gained at PSI expense in post-war years the latter wants to pick up ex-communist votes to the right and, even, to the left of the PCI. The PSI also has its eyes firmly fixed on the European Elections of 1979 where its long European tradition and new-found anti-communist zeal might stand it in good stead.

More difficult is the question of why the DC evaluated Berlinguer's formulations in such a favourable way. A princely gesture of gratitude towards a self-styled slave? The PCI have progressed during the past year from abstention in Parliament to positive support for the DC, and total solidarity with it during the Moro crisis. It has thus helped to get the DC out of all its difficulties and shown that its desire to gain the



Palmiro Togliatti honouring Stalin in Rome, 1949.

approval of the DC is its chief political priority. For this the DC will forgive the minor Leninist alterations of the PCI. As the editor of "La Repubblica" puts it "The central problem for the PCI is still, in spite of Berlinguer's denials, that of legitimacy." DC reaction to Berlinguer's interview must therefore be a feather in the cap of the communist secretary.

By MOLLY O'DUFFY

PTA. USED AGAINST WORKERS

By JOAN KELLY

If you don't cooperate with us, we'll have an exclusion order served." That's what the police told The Trade Union Campaign Against Repression leader Joe Edwards while he spent five days in prison in Scotland. Edwards was picked up under the Prevention of Terrorism Act at Stranraer as he was returning from a meeting of the United Troops Out Movement, in London.

Joe didn't cooperate so he was served with an exclusion order. That means if he tries to go back to Britain for any reason, he'll end up spending five years in jail. Paddy Kelly a Belfast Docker, got a similar exclusion order served in September when he went to Liverpool on a government training course. Neither is charged with any crime - except that they both come from anti-unionist working class areas of the North.

These two cases highlight the atrocious powers given to the police and the government under the PTA, which has been a law for four years now. The act is up for its annual renewal in Parliament in March. Its powers are a constant threat to Irish workers and political activists whether they live in Britain or Ireland - North or South.

evidence, can return people from Britain to Ireland - North or South. An exclusion order can also prevent people from the Republic from travelling to the North. People served with an exclusion order are never told the reasons why. They have no right of appeal. Fingerprints and photographs taken are retained by the police even if no charges are brought.

Over 125 exclusion orders have been served since 1974. A person has the right to representations to the Secretary of State objecting to the Exclusion order. Most didn't bother. As the police told Joe Edwards, he'd have to stay in jail for another three weeks if he wanted to use that 'right'. No wonder most people don't object to the order. Persons who have lived up to 20 years in Britain have been sent "back" to Ireland. Countless numbers have lost jobs. One merchant seaman from Belfast can no longer work. A lorry driver from Donegal who was excluded, can't enter the North, meaning he can't work. Numbers of families have been split up as a result of this draconian legislation.

Since 1975 there has been an increased use of the PTA against Irish people travelling to and from



JOE EDWARDS

When they spot a working class address, they pull you aside to take your name, address and date of birth to do a spot check. You wait while they feed it to the computer. They pulled me in on the way to London. But luckily the train was leaving so they let me go on. But they were waiting for me on the way back. My wife, Carol, showed what's acceptable middle class I.D. - a bankers card and a teacher's card. She wasn't stopped on the way over. They held me for two days in Stranraer for intense interrogation, then moved me to Dumfries Prison. I only saw a solicitor - one from Dumfries. He said there was nothing political or legal you can do."

The supposed intention of the PTA was to enable the police to arrest and charge suspected "terrorists". But research done by the NCCL in Britain makes it clear that the police already have enough powers to arrest anyone they want. And, more important very few people detained under the Act have been arrested or charged, and fewer again have been convicted for any crime. By November 1976 2,101 people were arrested under the PTA. Only 101, at 5% were charged. Over half of the charges were unrelated to what the police call "terrorists type offences." And the Home Secretary could not say how many convictions were obtained.

So why do they want to renew the act? And why, in spite of the fact that the bombings in Britain have been stopped for quite some time, has the PTA been used increasingly against people from the North travelling to Britain? First, as Edwards experience shows, it's useful as an information gathering network. The interrogators said, "If you give us information, you won't be excluded." By randomly picking up people from Catholic working class areas where Republicans are active, they hope to gather more

information for their intelligence network. As Edwards explained, "The interrogators were Scottish police but they knew details about the area where I live. They knew about the pubs in Andersonstown but they hadn't been in the British Army. They must have visited here and liaised with the special branch to get such intimate knowledge of the area."

The PTA is also useful for the police who want to harass political activists who are trying to raise the Irish question in Britain. This is particularly important now when groups like TUCAR are attempting to build support in the British trade union movement for a fight against repression.

As well once the police get powers like these, they want to hold onto them for future use. The Special Branch made it clear to Edwards that they expected the PTA to be writing permanently onto the statute books, particularly to deal with the "worsening Arab Situation". The PTA has already been used against Cypriots and others.

The Belfast dockers showed us the way. When Paddy Kelly and the other dockers were being held, they went

on strike stopping seven ships from docking in Belfast. They picketed the city hall and Stormont and blocked motorways and city streets. Unfortunately the issue was dropped once Paddy Kelly got sent back to Belfast. And the dockers didn't get support from British dockers who have taken strike action as well. But there is beginning to be more support in Britain to fight the

us if we don't bother them", they said.

We need to organise support among rank and file trade unionists to fight this and other repressive legislation. It was rank and file Irish Transport dockers who forced Paddy Devlin to speak out. We need to force bureaucrats like Devlin to end their cooperation with the police - (Devlin regularly submits

	1st. 6mths.	6/75 to 5/77	5/77 to 5/78
Total exclusions	49	40	36
Sent to Republic	17	-	2

Source for both tables: State Research Bulletin Aug-Sept 1978.

PTA. The Liverpool and Dumfries trades councils have been holding meetings about the use of the PTA in their cities as a result of the detention of Joe Edwards. Even the screws in Dumfries prison told Edwards the PTA was disgraceful. They were ex British army and served in the North. They said the vast majority of the British Army want out. "The Irish won't bother

names of workers for police approval before they travel.) We should urge the British trade union movement to fight renewal of this Act in March. Rank and file meetings, resolutions in local branches and in trades councils, and make contacts with the British workers should help us prepare to take action together the next time workers are held under the PTA.

	1st. 6mths.	6/75 to 5/76	5/76 to 5/77	5/77 to 5/78
Total detained.	630	985	936	714
48hrs. to 7day detention	91	114	45	28
Up to 48 hrs. detention	269	136	172	98
Detained at ports.	270 (42%)	736 (74%)	719 (77%)	588 (81%)

The PTA was originally passed in November 1974 by a panic stricken mob of MPs immediately after the Birmingham pub bombs. Under the PTA the police can, without warrant, hold a person for up to seven days. In the North the PTA is combined with the Emergency Provisions Act to permit detention for 72 hours under the Emergency Provisions and followed by up to seven days detention under the PTA. Examining officers at ports of entry can detain people for questioning and examining. Under the power of exclusion the Home Secretary, without bringing charges or presenting

Britain. State Research Bulletin No.7 (Aug-Sep, 1978) shows that 81.58% of all detention cases are those detained at ports. Detention at a port is more dangerous and difficult to fight. A traveller is isolated and more at the mercy of the police. Family, friends, and fellow workers are not so readily available to organise protests and obtain legal help.

Joe Edwards spoke to Socialist Worker Review about his experience with the PTA. Usually at Stranraer the police just pull the football crowd aside to check their identities. "When we went through, they wanted to see everyone's I.D.



Northern Ireland's Education Minister, Lord Peter Melchett has recently announced a new child care scheme which amounts to treating children of working mothers as social problems. As result he has drawn condemnation from a variety of trade unions and political groups. Melchett offered to double the nursery and play places in the North by 1983.

Since there is next to nothing available now, there can't be much more in 5 years time. The Equal Opportunities Commission has shown that, by 1983 60% of children under 5 will still be unable to avail of child-care facilities

WE WILL NOT STAY AT HOME

By ED MOLONEY

Working women desperately need child care facilities. There are no full day nurseries provided by the government. There are 5 privately run nurseries for workers and students in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Coleraine University and a textile factory.

Research in the latest Bulletin of the Belfast Workers Research Unit shows that 72% of children under 5 have virtually no facilities. But since most children are attending school by 4 years of age, the percentage of children without facilities in the 0-4 age group is much higher.

So Melchett is not offering to do much in the way of building new facilities. But his document, outlining his new proposals, was based on an atrocious rationale. The government departments responsible for child-care facilities are the Department of Education, which operates nurseries and primary schools, and the Department of Health and Social Services. The DHSS runs play-groups for children in "deprived areas" or from "problem families". This approach, which is the basis for Melchett's proposals, treats

child care as a preventive measure restricted to "problem families".

This is an outrageous attack on the right of women to work and have a family as well. The N.U.P.E. organiser, Grey McCormick criticised Melchett's philosophy which is based on "romantic middle class assumptions of the nuclear family with Daddy out at work, Mammy happy at home".

However, 35% of women in the North are working. 50% of them are married. Those who have young children have to depend on relatives or unregistered child-minders because there are no government facilities. The adequate Child Care facilities prevents many others from getting a job. A recent survey in the Shankill and Oldpark areas in Belfast showed that 75% of women at home wished to return to work.

Most of those women must go to work because of economic necessity. The government would like to make them feel guilty about leaving their children behind. Behind much of Melchett's philosophy is the age old notion that the majority of women ought to stay at home where they belong.

The Irish Revolution S.F.W.P. style

The Irish Industrial Revolution - Sinn Fein The Workers Party, £2.00

Towards the end of the sixties, the Official Sinn Fein was a focus of attraction for many hundreds and possibly thousands of left-wingers. Today, after many splits and purges, it is seen by many as a sectarian rump that is continually drifting farther and farther to the right. The Irish Industrial Revolution is vital to any understanding of its present politics.

The first edition of the book met with heavy criticism and went out of print suspiciously quickly. We can therefore be assured that the second edition is not only an updating but, in fact, represents the considered position, on reflection, of Sinn Fein The Workers Party.

And despite a number of rough edges and confusions of thought, that position is essentially one of reformism. It is not a classical example of reformism. SFWP is not an ordinary Labour Party even though it is trying to fill the vacuum caused by the spineless degeneration of the Labour Party, and is securing places of influence in the trade union bureaucracy. Where the ordinary social - democratic programme is built on the nationalisation of some sectors of the economy. SFWP do not propose any nationalisations.

MONOPOLY

Even in the case of such a blatant monopoly as Cement Roadstone, all that is proposed is: "By virtue of the massive amounts of state financial aid extended to Cement Roadstone Holdings to finance the immense new expansion of cement capacity at Platin near Drogheda, and by virtue of the fact that the state, through the I.D.A. now owns a minority percentage of Cement Roadstone Holdings", shares, its corporate plans in the period 1977-'86 will be dovetailed, under the direction of the Industrial Planning Authority with the national plan

REVIEW

for the sector and the plan for expansion of the State Construction Company".

DIRECTS

This is typical example of the Irish Industrial Revolution The State 'directs', but does not nationalise. The State sector is also to be expanded by giving it the cream of industrial expansion: 330,000 new jobs in the state sector, only 82,000 in



the private sector. By this means the state sector is expanded to 48% of the workforce. The bureaucracy of state capitalism is, of course, a figment of the 'ultra-left's' imagination.

Sinn Fein pride themselves on their "seriousness" and ability to offer plans for the here and now.

Reviewed by JOHN GOODWILLIE

The Irish Industrial Revolution therefore attempts to set out in great detail the methods to be used to achieve the expansion of employment. But the whole edifice is built on sand. The method seems to be this: Using Brendan Walsh's population forecasts it is estimated that to achieve full employment in 1986, 412,400 jobs will have to be created. This of course will require a massive investment. But how the capitalist state - whose existence SFWP accepts - is to get the money of the capitalists, we are not told. Rather the book turns to intelligent guesswork and the use of such assumptions as, that - factories making machines will have to expand quicker than factories processing food, to set targets for each industry.

MODEL

Now if you wanted to do this seriously, of course, you would need either detailed statistical information which is not available to the public or a computer model of the Irish Economy, preferably both. Otherwise you would not see the bottlenecks - the shortage of workers with special skills, the raw materials which are in short supply - which will prevent the implementation of the plan. And get around the bottlenecks, you would need an overall Control of the economy far beyond SFWP's concept of an Industrial Planning Authority which is somehow going to persuade private industry to be good boys.

You would need, in fact, the overthrow of the power of private industry: the exploration of the Imperialist owned industries which SFWP propose to continue to tolerate. And to do this, you would need to mobilise the working class.

But in SFWP's book, the working class are passive. In fact, they will have to accept an "initial income restraint required to finance state company investment". That, no doubt, represents one explanation of SFWP's move towards favouring National Wage Agreements. And you would need a perspective of linking up with a rising wave of working class revolt in other countries in order to protect the Irish Economy against imperialist blockade. Yet, SFWP's plan is for a 26 county economy (not even a 32-county one.) building itself in a free trade environment.

In short you would need the building of a movement towards a working republic not the elaboration of a plan for further industrialisation of Ireland, before we are allowed to think about a worker's republic.

HISTORY

The theoretical case for the Irish industrial revolution is to be found in the first, historical section. There seem to be two main thrusts of the argument. First private enterprise failed to industrialise Ireland. This was not because of imperialist domination but because the Irish capitalist class "were and are by any standards the most avaricious and lazy ruling class ever seen in the European polity". Their "capital was never put to work productively but invested in banking and property speculation". They refused to construct a healthy capitalism". The implication is that if only they had not been feckless Catholics they would have looked after their class interests better.

This pathetic moralising fails to recognise the objective stranglehold that imperialism exercised over the Irish economy. The Irish industries that grew up under Grattan's Parliament were to a considerable extent based on government subsidies. Irish industry declined after the subsidies and protection were abolished

and competition from Britain became stronger, the agricultural prosperity of the Napoleonic wars ended, and the Irish pound was realigned upwards to achieve parity with the pound sterling.

The second concept behind The Irish Industrial Revolution is that imperialism - American Imperialism in particular - is playing a progressive role in industrialising Ireland and enlarging the working class, who will be its grave diggers. Of course, all Marxists believe that, at one stage, capitalism on a world scale was a progressive force in that it is a



TOM MCGIOLLA

higher form of economy than feudalism and that it creates the working class - the only class which can create socialism. And there is a sense in which the further development of capitalism the enlargement of the working class, the introduction of more advanced techniques in industry assist the organisation of the working class and provide a more advanced industrial case for the worker's state of the future.

But these things are not a necessary pre-condition of a workers state. In imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism Lenin showed that capitalism had gone as far as possible to provide an economic basis for Socialism. The key factor in the future was for the working class to achieve sufficient self-awareness to emancipate themselves. And the formation of the worlds first workers state in 1917 showed that this theory was valid.

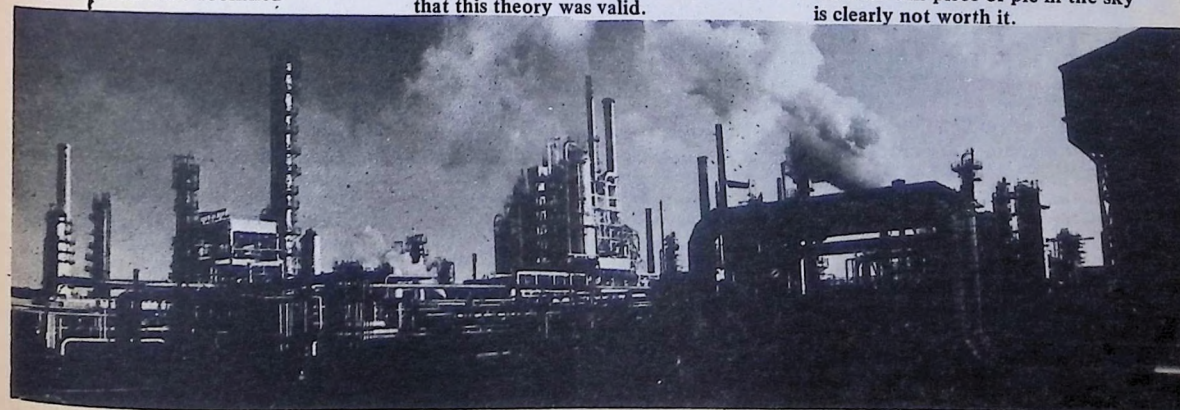
The SFWP do not quite say that imperialism ought to be supported because it is progressive. But they sail very close to the wind. If they are not careful, the boom will come around and knock them into the imperialists arms - as has already happened to the British and Irish Communist Organisation.

The point is this; if the management of a firm comes up with a proposal for rationalisation and redundancies, it is true that the nationalised factory will be a more efficient productive unit and more suited for a workers takeover. But the workers will never achieve the ability to take over by allowing the firm to trample over them. The only basis on which workers can acquire that confidence and consciousness is by class struggle, by fighting. However, if they lose that

fight, they don't campaign five years later for the unscrambling of the nationalised industry into its constituent parts. Similarly, while it was right to oppose Ireland's entry into the EEC, we don't now campaign for withdrawal.

With all the enthusiasm of the converts that they are, the SFWP tell the small farmers that jobs will be found for them in industry. Now it is true that some socialists have exaggerated the radical potential of the small farmers. But there is still a land question. If we add to the farms that have no heirs, the surplus land that can be made available through the limitation of land holdings to a certain acreage and through the takeover of land in speculators' hands, there is a basis for land agitation, and the National Land League have proved it to a modest extent. The place of socialists is in supporting such agitation, not in promising jobs like manna from heaven.

But manna from heaven is, overall, the method of The Irish Industrial Revolution. Every proposal is one which could be implemented by a government which was miraculously free from capitalist pressures, Irish or international. The price to be paid by the working class for this piece of pie in the sky is clearly not worth it.



BEYOND ORANGE AND GREEN - A MARXIST ANALYSIS ?

Reviewed by
KIERAN ALLEN

If her publishers were to be believed, then this book could be regarded as a "strikingly original,.... daring and prophetic" Marxist analysis of the conflict in Northern Ireland. In fact, neither of these adjectives are particularly applicable - although it does genuinely set out to question some of the dominant assumptions of a certain section of the Irish left.

Probert's chief target is that tradition which has both "regarded the struggle for socialism as inseparable from the struggle for National re-unification" and which has also "subsumed the struggle for socialism under the struggle to liberate Ireland". One of the key criticisms she makes of this tradition is that it has been unable to come to terms with the Protestant working class.

Such a choice of a target is unfortunate and tends to set up a soft argument which is then relatively easy to destroy. Essentially, it amounts to identifying Michael Farrell of the Peoples Democracy as the key spokesperson for the traditional assumptions of the Irish left.



Michael Farrell
Peoples Democracy

While a revolutionary socialist perspective certainly argues for the creation of a united Socialist Ireland - and in that sense identifies with the struggle for 'national re-unification' - it does not necessarily 'subsume' that struggle into one for National Libe-

ration. On the contrary, it is precisely the reverse: it is only the struggle of the working class for its own goals, for socialism, that it will become possible to achieve the traditional aims of a united Ireland.

FORMULAS

That point may seem obscure - but only because of the attempt to reduce it to concise formulas. Essentially one of the dominant arguments, on the Irish left is the following: must the current struggle in the North become part of, or transformed into, a struggle for socialism that is naturally fought on a class basis. Or can it not succeed simply through its extension to the Southern working class while maintaining its goals as those of national re-unification and self-determination for Ireland.

The latter position is held by those who have attempted to mechanically adopt Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution to Ireland. Such an interpretation sees the working-class in a 'neo-colonial' or underdeveloped country, taking up the struggle for the traditional demands of a bourgeoisie who have been bought off by imperialism. Through its successful mobilisation on these demands it more or less automatically 'passes over' to the establishment of a workers' state.

Such a perspective is not only based on the elitist conception, that socialism can somehow be achieved although the working class is not engaged in a struggle where it is fully conscious that it, as a class must take control of society, - but it is also thoroughly impractical. On one hand, the Southern working class who have entered into extensive struggles against their 'own' bosses will not be mobilised to use all its power as a class simply for nationalist goals. On the other hand, the Protestant working class will not sever its ties with Loyalism unless those who are presently engaged

in the struggle against imperialism are not only to the forefront of a struggle for secularisation but also their goals are explicitly anti-capitalist. Only in that way can it be shown that the aim is to guarantee to the whole of the working-class a far higher standard of living than can be achieved through the defense of marginal privilege.

DIFFERENCES

However the key thing is not so much the differences in the theoretical analysis as the practical conclusion that derive from them. Those who fail to see the need to transform the present struggle into one for explicitly anti-capitalist goals, tend to write off the Protestant working class. It is thought that the Loyalist bloc can be almost automatically broken once partition has ended or at least after Britain has been forced to withdraw. Those who hold the opposite view have tended to argue that the struggle for a British withdrawal can only be successful if it has first won the support of a substantial section of the Protestant - working class; that this support will only be won if the anti-imperialist is linked to a struggle against capitalism itself; that socialists must make every effort in the here and now to intervene in the economic struggles of Protestant workers.

Probert makes a number of useful points against those who have written off the Protestant working class. In particular, she rejects the explanation of Loyalism which rests on the view that the Protestant working class are simply unwitting tools in the hands of a set of manipulative employers. Such an explanation, however which is held by many Republican writers, is particularly suitable to those who view the Protestant working class as essentially passive.

However, her criticisms in this regard are particularly compromised by her failure to see the central role which the Northern State - itself played in cementing Loyalism through its ability to guarantee defense of material privileges for Protestants. Throughout the book, it becomes clear that her political perspective is confined to "re-structuring the State Apparatus" in the North. As a result she fails to understand socialists' support for the unification of the country - or to put it another way, the smashing of the Northern State.

If Probert rejects the conspiracy theory of Loyalism she does, however, counterpose her own equally invalid economic determinist argument. In this regard, she sees partition and the creation of the Northern state as 'a direct reflection' of the contradictory interests of the two sections of the Irish economy. The Northern



12th of July and the protestants exhibit their traditional supremacy over the Catholics

economy was geared to the markets of the British empire, whereas the Southern economy needed to establish tariff barriers in order to shelter the emerging local capital.

However Probert takes also this argument one step farther. It is not surprising that when you hold to such a method of determinism as Probert then you also end up with the conclusion that those who nominally control society tend to act in a rational fashion since they are simply acting according to the dictates of the economic situation. This is precisely what Probert does.

British imperialism, it is claimed, did not feel threatened by the rising nationalist movement at the beginning of the century. She states that its efforts to "effect a compromise between the two communities in Ireland, in order to establish an all-Ireland, political structure, seem to have been made in good faith". However, seen the irreconcilability of the two communities, it bowed to the inevitable economic reality.

CAPITALISTS

there can be no doubt that the two sets of capitalists held two divergent orientations and therefore, in a sense, there was a material basis for the partition of the country. But that is not the essential point. British imperialism had obviously a much clearer grasp of reality than Probert - it did not allow its judgement of the potential of the Nationalist Movement to be determined simply by the politics of its leadership. It looked to the mass of workers and small farmers who had begun to engage in a struggle against its rule. Partition and the treaty were part of its strategy for holding that movement back. However, the politics of the Sinn Féin leadership were important in help-

ing to cement the alliance of Protestant workers to their Unionist bosses. An image of a green, Catholic and tariff protected isle offered absolutely nothing to them. As a result the partition of the country was a much more complex development than a simple reflection of an economic fact.

The point for Probert's economic determinism is an image of the working class as totally passive. Despite her claims to be a Marxist, there is never once the feeling from the book that the mass of working people have played or will play a decisive role in changing history.

It is the notion of a passive working class which leads Probert to her reformist perspectives which are outlined in the latter half of the book. Essentially, her primary concern is to devise a strategy which can both 'improve this democracy (in Northern Ireland)' and 'simplify the class antagonisms'. Democratic institutions must be devised in Northern Ireland where the working class can achieve a political representation. She says "the establishment of a genuinely democratic assembly is a pre requisite of any settlement in which the working class may have a political voice".

What is presented here is a new version of the once popular stages theory - except the political context is now totally confined to Northern Ireland. Probert's general orientation places a central emphasis on the working class fighting to strengthen and in some cases helping to create the instructions of bourgeois democracy. In other countries it lends to the reformism typical of the Eurocommunists, but in Northern Ireland it is both totally utopian and leads straight into the arms of the most reactionary right wingers. Thus Probert saw the Convention setup after direct rule as 'an important step towards the establishment of democratic institutions in Northern

Ireland! Those to the right of Harry West were among the foremost proponents of that view.

STRUGGLE

While Socialists would always be to the forefront of the struggle against the erosion of democratic rights, the call to support the 'democratic institutions' is nothing but a sham for supporting the strengthening and credibility of the state machine. That is precisely the road the Eurocommunists have travelled - and incidentally ended up supporting increased repression. The exact same dynamic is at work in Northern Ireland - only on a more exaggerated basis. The creation of 'democratic institutions' in Northern Ireland, or in other words, the reorganisation of a Local State apparatus, can only be achieved by the smashing of the Catholic working class. That in itself is sufficient to deprive the working class of any real political representation. But more than that, the return of a 'democratic assembly' in Northern Ireland would be a major factor in helping to re-create and cement the Loyalist bloc. The promise of re-narrowed discrimination, of control over local patronage would once again lend a concrete and tangible reality to the ideology of Loyalism which still maintains a grip over substantial sections of the Protestant working class.

Behind Probert's confused and well-meaning reformism lies an opening to the right. Nevertheless, the book is worth a read - if for no other reason, than it represents one attempt to provide a Marxist analysis of Protestant working class politics.

Belinda Probert
BEYOND THE ORANGE AND GREEN

THE BATTLE LINE — the coal strike 1978
Kim Moody & Jim Woodward
Sun press, Detroit. 126 pages.

Do you remember stories in the papers about a big coal-miners strike in the USA at the beginning of the year? Stories about picketers being shot by employer-hired thugs; about electricity blackouts, due to the four month strike? Then President Carter invoked the Taft Hartley act, with its compulsory 60 day cooling off period. Then we heard no more. Ever wondered what happened? Well you should. Our National wage agreements are looking more like the US labour contracts every year. These contracts are negotiated by bureaucratic union leaders on a nation wide scale and include no-strike clauses. Our Labour Court is becoming as slow and cumbersome as their "conciliation and arbitration" system. And the draconian, strike-breaking Taft-Hartley Act might form a model for future Irish Industrial Relations legislation. Certainly many Irish employers and politicians would like to see some of the American features adopted here.

This book gives a good insight into the American industrial relations, while telling the story of the coal strike. Written by members of the International Socialists, it appears less than six months after the ending of the strike. And yet provides a very professional analysis of the factors behind the dispute. They also discuss the condition of the coal industry, the Union - the 280,000 member United Mine Workers of America - and the results and consequences of the strike. And, surprisingly, all this is packed in a short, easy-to-read, illustrated book.

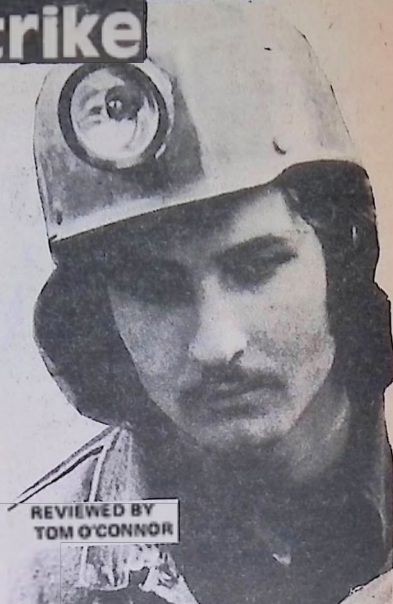
The strike was provoked by the employers, whose profits had been declining in recent years. The owners of the mines are mainly private oil, steel and electricity companies.

BATTLE LINE

The Coal Strike of '78

AS the latter two groups use their own coal a price rise was no answer to the problem. Anyway Carter wouldn't allow more price rises. So they decided to screw more production out of the workers. The main drawback to this was the union-imposed safety regulations. Seeing a weak union leadership the bosses insisted in defeating the safety regulations when the 1977 contract came up for negotiation. The employers attacked with confidence and the Union leaders capitulated. But the rank and file union members rejected the agreement and pushed their Leaders back to the negotiating table, twice.

An interesting feature of this and other strikes was the power of the picket in America. All blue collar workers in mining, engineering, cars and the big traditional industries respect a picket - regardless of whether it is official or unofficial. This is a type of respect for workers power which is being eroded in Ireland by the ICTU two tier picket system. Using this power the miners could spread the strike with a "flying picket", not only to union mines, but even to non-unionized mines. After 110 days of facing odds, Irish trade unionists would never expect police brutality, murder by employer hired gunmen, Government intervention - the workers finally had to face the dreaded Taft-Hartley Act. This requires strikers to return to work for 60 days or face arrest. The miners lifted the pickets but not a single union member returned. Such was the solidarity that the

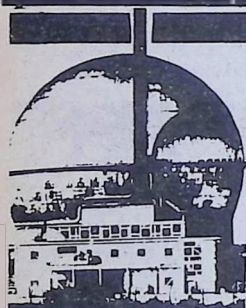


REVIEWED BY
TOM O'CONNOR

police did not dare arrest a single miner. Two weeks later the employers came across with an acceptable offer. Not a complete victory but at least the miners have the opportunity of electing a more militant leadership before the next contract comes due. (this is a feature sadly lacking in Irish trade unionism) And with the strength they showed this year they will be better prepared and organised to beat the employers next time.

"THE BATTLE LINE" is available by mail order from SWR, C/O SLP, 9 Parnell Sq, Dublin 1. price £1.50 (incl. p&h).

NUCLEAR IRELAND?



One of the main things that has been missing so far in the nuclear debate is a short, precise, easy to understand account of the main issues involved, especially for people not familiar with the basic arguments. Nuclear Ireland? sets out to fill this gap. The book is designed "to give an account of both the technological and social issues as they apply to Ireland

in the nuclear power debate."

The book gives an excellent, easy to understand account of the main technological issues: the nature of radiation; the effects of radiation and how a reactor works; the different types of reactors; and the safety of reactors. This account is extremely simply written, easy to follow and will be especially useful to people with no scientific background as it explains the main technological issues in a down to earth way and doesn't get carried away with scientific rhetoric.

The point of the book which deals with the main social issues is also very simply written but not in the same comprehensive way as the technological issues. There is a good section on the effects the building of nuclear reactors would have on civil and political liberties. Nuclear power requires careful government regulation and leads inevitably towards the strong state. Britain already has specially armed police to guard nuclear installations and they are not subject to the Police Authority or Parliament such increases in

police power would lead to an intensification of surveillance techniques and a curtailing of individual and trade union rights.

The conclusion of the book is that the Irish people themselves should decide whether or not to go nuclear, presumably by means of a referendum and that before this a full and open public debate should take place. But after the Windesale farce it is questionable what if anything can be achieved by a public inquiry.

"Nuclear Ireland?" is well worth reading especially for

those with little knowledge of the nuclear debate but it is only an introductory, giving a very good introductory account of most of the main issues involved in the Nuclear debate in Ireland. It does not attempt any comprehensive analysis of the main issues arising from the debate. For such an analysis we will have to look elsewhere.

NUCLEAR IRELAND?
Matthew Hussey and
Carole Craig Co-op Books
Focus Ireland 90p.

REVIEWED BY
BRIAN McKENNA

THEM and US in history!

Divided city offers an interpretation of events which were vital to the growth of an organised industrial working class in Ireland. The events of 1913 have often been almost ignored in accounts of the period. The rise of the labour movement has been seen as separate from the rise of "political" nationalism and as being relatively far less important. Given the professionalisation of historical writing is not easy to counter this view, and to deal adequately with aspects of history which do not fit comfortably into the tale of oppression of the Catholic Irish, by England. The idea of unity in Irish society against the foreigner is a strong force in weakening understanding of the importance of the conflicts inherent in the capitalist system.

Divided City is unusual in that it tells working people something of the history of their own community, but it is also significant in the way that it has been produced. Most history books are written by individual historians, for other historians and for an elite educated public. Divided City with its emphasis on the working class community has

reviewed by
F. BURNS.

June 1979. It is clear that the method of work of the CDU offers greater possibilities for the development of educators in working class communities than does rigid control by the bureaucracy of the Department of Education, but this progress is now being threatened. The book itself is in two parts. The first four chapters review the social history of Dublin in the early years of the century. Chapter five introduces Trade Unionism as portrayed in the work of James Larkin, and chapters six to eight relate the history of the lock-out of 1913. The text is clear and always interesting and the use of illustration and documentary material is one of the book's best features. The welcome due to "Divided City" does not obscure certain historical weaknesses. Throughout the book there is more work put into illustrating the



represents the opposite side of the view which separates politics from social history, seeing the workers' struggle as largely social in context and method. Criticism must take account of the educational purpose of the book and the age of the students with whom its themes were developed, but a book developed in a more general context would have to attend more fully to certain factors chief among these are the general economic and political conditions of the time leading to the growth of organisation among the labouring classes, and the tortuous relationship of nationalism and socialism typified in the life of Connolly.

"Divided City" is a considerable achievement for the CDU, and further books of this type would open up a new understanding of how the school system can play an active part in strengthening the community it serves.

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been produced by teachers working over a number of years to produce material for use by their students. The finished work is part of the course material of the Humanities curriculum being developed by the CDU in TCD and being used largely in Vocational Schools in Dublin City. The work is examined in Group and Intermediate Certificate examinations, where it is equated to English History and Geography courses. The aim of the course is to educate children from the stand point of their own reality, but despite the huge amount of work done the Department has recently stated that the course will not be examined after

style of the times than into analysing the larger forces which were combining to force the Dublin workers into revolt. It would be easy to conclude that the people were fighting for better living conditions only, and to ignore the political significance of the growth of working class organisation and consciousness. Emphasis on Larkin's leadership draws attention from the struggle and organisation of the people themselves who are largely portrayed as suffering heroically while Larkin carried on the struggle on their behalf. The importance of Connolly is felt throughout the book, but is never dealt with explicitly and clearly. To an extent the book



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LIBERTY HALL (By W. Orpen)

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